

HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE
MONTANA NATIONAL GUARD
TECHNICIAN & AGR BULLETIN

JULY NO: 01-07

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STAFF

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SGT KEITH HERRIN

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SGT TIMOTHY McCOY

QUALITY PAYS THROUGH EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS
LEADERSHIP ~ ~ ~ TRUST ~ ~ ~ INTEGRITY

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SECTION I – GENERAL INFORMATION

COL JAMES HOGAN
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MSG ANNE MARONEY

HUMAN RESOURCE OFFICER	COL HOGAN, JIM	3115
PERSONNEL ASSISTANT	SGT THURSTON, CINDY	3116
SEEM	MSG MARONEY, ANNE	3117
LABOR RELATIONS SPECIALIST	SMS HAGAN, ROGER	3118
SUPERVISORY PERS MGMT SPEC	SMS HAGAN, ROGER	3119
PSM/EDS	2LT KELLY, KEITH	3120
CLASSIFICATION SPECIALIST	SMS LOSING, WAYNE	3121
STAFFING SPECIALIST	SSG STRAINER, EDWINA	3122
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PERSONNEL ASST EMPL REL	SFC KABERLINE, SHARON	3130
EMPLOYEE RELATIONS SPECIALIST	TSG GREGORI, ROBERT	3131
PERS ASSISTANT/STAFF-CLASS	SGT HERRIN, KEITH	3133
FAX		3135

* Website: www.discoveringmontana.com/dma/hro

STATE EQUAL EMPLOYMENT MANAGER:

Excerpts from “EEOC FEDERAL LAWS PROHIBITING JOB DISCRIMINATION: QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS” BOOKLET:

- What are the Federal Laws Prohibiting Job Discrimination?
 - Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII), which prohibits employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin;
 - The Equal Pay Act of 1963 (EPA), which protects men and women who perform substantially equal work in the same establishment from sex-based wage discrimination;
 - The Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 (ADEA), which protects individuals who are 40 years of age or older;
 - Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), which prohibits employment discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities in the private sector, and in state and local government;

-- Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibits discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities who work in the federal government;

-- The Civil Rights Act 1991, which provides monetary damages in cases of intentional employment discrimination.

- What Discriminatory Practices Are Prohibited by These Laws?

Under Title VII, the ADA, and the ADEA, it is illegal to discriminate in any aspect of employment, including:

- | | |
|--|--|
| -- hiring and firing; | -- training and apprenticeship programs; |
| -- compensation, assignment, or classification of employees; | -- fringe benefits; |
| -- transfer, promotion, layoff, or recall; | -- pay, retirement plans, and disability leave; or |
| -- job advertisements; | -- other terms and conditions of employment |
- Discriminatory practices under these laws also include:
- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| -- recruitment; | -- Harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, or age; |
| -- testing; | |
| -- use of company facilities; | |
- Retaliation against an individual for filing a charge of discrimination, participating in an investigation, or opposing discriminatory practices;
- Employment decisions based on stereotypes or assumptions about the abilities, traits, or performance of individuals of a certain sex, race, age, religion, or ethnic group, or individuals with disabilities; and
- Denying employment opportunities to a person because of marriage to, or association with, an individual of a particular race, religion, or national origin, or an individual with a disability. Title VII also prohibits discrimination because of participation in schools, or places of worship associated with a particular racial, ethnic, or religious group.

EEO COUNSELORS:

STATE EQUAL EMPLOYMENT MANAGER:

ANNE MARONEY, 3117/747-3117

HELENA COUNSELORS:

RONDA SCOTT, 3291/747-3291
TOM MAHONEY, 3361/747-3361
LINDA KORTUM, 3453/747-3453

GREAT FALLS COUNSELORS:

MIKE RAND, 2334/279-2334
LEROY ATCHISON, 2213/279-2213
MARK REAGOR, 2348/279-2348
LYNN OATMAN, 2323/279-2323



ZIG ZIGLAR tells of visiting the Washington monument. As he and his party approached the monument, he heard a guide announcing loudly that there would be a two-hour wait to ride the elevator to the top of the monument. However, with a smile on his face the guide then said, "There is no one waiting to go to the top if you are willing to take the stairs."

KING DUNCAN
King's Treasury of Dynamic Humor
Seven Worlds Press

Employee/Member Self Service (E/MSS)**☛CHECK IT OUT! YOUR LES ONLINE!!**

This is a website available to you so you can access your Military and Civilian LES. The E/MSS keeps a copy of the three most recent LES' for you. This is a very helpful website and so easy to use. All you need is a PIN number and you will be off and running! Here are some tidbits about E/MSS:

E/MSS is an innovative, automated system that puts you in control of processing certain discretionary pay data items without using paper forms. You can also get your pay statements using E/MSS.

E/MSS saves time-E/MSS eliminates the need to write letters or fill out forms by letting you make your own changes immediately with user-friendly technology.

E/MSS is convenient-You can access E/MSS nearly 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to change or review your current information, or to check your most recent pay statement.

E/MSS is reliable-E/MSS has the same procedural checks for accuracy as our paper forms.

For more information go to <https://emss.dfas.mil> or try <http://www.dfas.mil/emss/> and access the Q & A page.

SECTION II – LABOR RELATIONS

SMS ROGER HAGAN

What Is A “*Formal Discussion*”?

Recently, I have been contacted by the labor organizations asking about management’s intentions relating to a particular plan or action “*rumored*” to be taking place. Most often, when I followed-up on the rumor, what I discovered is that management has been “thinking out loud” and involving bargaining unit members in their thinking.

Now you may ask, “Geez, I thought that’s what Hagan wanted us to do! Didn’t he always remind us to involve our employees in our decision making rather than springing it on ‘me at the last minute?’” Well, you’re right...I have always encouraged you to talk early and talk often with all of your subordinates because the finished product of your discussions most assuredly is of better quality.

But (and there’s always one of those, right?), when you prepare to talk to your employees about your ideas on how to change the way you do things, or how to rearrange the work assignments to streamline the work, or any other change to a general condition of employment, you must always remember to ask yourself; “Is this a Formal Discussion?” This article is not intended to tie your hands in everything you do, nor is it meant to insinuate that you have to “ask the HRO” for permission every time you want to talk with your employees. I just want you to be aware that some management discussions require an *offer* of union representation, if they meet the criteria of a Formal Discussion.

A Formal Discussion is a discussion that requires you, as a manager, to include the labor organization (offer them the opportunity to be present). And yes, there is a law that provides for this. The purpose of this law is to give the union an opportunity to safeguard its institutional interests and the interests of employees in the bargaining unit. In other words, the agency can’t exclude the union from its discussions with employees on certain subjects.

So how do you know if your discussion is a *Formal Discussion*? Well, as I have said in all of my Labor Relations Training, “It depends!” But here are some basics for you to consider before you embark upon a discussion with bargaining unit employees. In order for the union to have a right to be present (representation) there must be: 1) a discussion; 2) which is formal; 3) between one or more representatives of the agency and one or more bargaining unit employees or their representatives; 4) concerning any grievance or any personnel policy or practice or other general condition of employment.

Now if that last paragraph hasn’t confused you, then you are a likely candidate as my replacement in the Labor Relations world. But, if you are truly a normal human being, then read on to see if I can ‘un-confuse’ you. You all probably think you know what a ‘discussion’ is but I’d better clarify that some. A discussion could be in the form of a meeting, could involve only one person talking and the rest listening, or even could be a telephone conversation.

Now to determine if that discussion is 'formal' requires the application of certain factors. Some of those factors are: 1) the status of the individual who held the discussions; 2) whether any other management representatives attended; 3) the site of the discussions; 4) how the meetings for the discussion were called; 5) how long the discussions lasted; 6) whether a formal agenda was established for the discussions; and 7) the manner in which the discussions were conducted.

Soooo, you're saying that my last attempt didn't un-confuse you. Well, now you can see how crazy this thing can get. So do me a favor. The next time you intend to discuss a grievance or personnel policy or practice or any other general condition of employment, and you are unsure if it meets the definition of Formal Discussion, please give me a call. In just a few minutes of 'informal' discussion between us I am convinced we can figure this out. Thanks for your cooperation.



Section III - Personnel Systems and Employee Development

2LT Keith J. Kelly (406) 841-3120/DSN: 747-3120

Computer Skills Development

Have you ever wanted to improve your computer skills or study for certification in a particular part of the Information Technology (IT) world? Well have I got a bargain for you. The Departments of the Army and Air Force have been gracious enough to contract for all their employees with an On-line computer learning company. There are free online information technology courses on more than 1,100 technical subjects. Classes range from how to use word-processor, database and spreadsheet programs for beginner through advanced users to 70 certification-preparation courses for systems administrators and computer programmers. Many of the courses may qualify for college credit. Registration must be made on a computer tied into your respective service (army.mil or air.mil) wide area network using a military domain address. Once the registration is complete, students may log on at home, a local library or any other computer connected to the Internet. For Army members or civilian employees surf to www.armycbt.army.mil for registration. For Air members and employees jump to afcbt.den.disa.mil for registration. Supervisors please use this economic alternative to provide your employees to develop their computer skills. I have personally taken the courses on UNIX and ORACLE and am impressed with the quality of the courseware.

Upcoming Training Opportunities

NGB Supervisory Orientation Course 10 – 14 Sep 2001 1-189th AVN BN CSAB Helena
New Employee Orientation 25 Oct 2001 – Ramp Room HQ MTNG Helena
Near-Term Retirement Planning for CSRS & FERS employees Sep 18 –20 – HQ 120
FW, Great Falls MT – Cottonwood Auditorium



For as little as \$25.00 allotment out of your paycheck you can secure your children's education. This tax-favored Section 529 college savings plan allows any family in the U.S. to prepay college tuition, fees, room and board. The program is based on a national college cost index and the funds may be used at any eligible college, university, proprietary or vocational school worldwide. The combination of tax benefits, guarantee to meet college costs, low deposit amounts and backing by the full faith and credit of the U.S. government up to \$100,000 per depositor make it the safest, simplest, most effective way to save for college. For more information give them a call at 1-800-888-2723 or check out their web site: montana.collegesavings.com.

Career 'Advice' from CBO: Be Highly Trained

The Congressional Budget Office, in a new report on trends in federal personnel, has effectively provided a guide to keeping federal jobs and advancing in them, pointing out the government's need for highly skilled, highly educated and highly trained workers. It noted that in 1985, about 79 percent of the federal work force held jobs in white-collar occupations and that 40 percent were designated as professional or administrative. Those percentages now stand at 87 and 56 percent. Similarly, the portion of the work force with a bachelor's or higher degree rose from 30 to 40 percent, and the portion of the white-collar work force at grade 11 or higher rose from 39 to 50 percent.

Contract Management, IT Skills in Demand

CBO's report (see item above) goes on to say that although management improvement efforts may reduce lower-level positions, "they may also increase the demand for highly trained personnel. For example, contracting out to private firms, which often shifts lower-skilled work into the private sector, may increase the role in government for well-trained professionals to prepare and monitor contracts. Computerization and the rise of the Internet have also increased jobs in government for technically trained personnel." For a look at CBO's assessment of where the federal work force is going, go to <http://www.fedweek.com> and click on the "Hot Free Info" button on the home page

SECTION IV – EMPLOYEE RELATIONS/SERVICE

SFC SHARON KABERLINE

TSG ROBERT GREGORI

Thrift Savings Plan "Updates and changes

ROLLOVERS AND TRANSFERS

Effective July 1, 2001, under Public Law 106-361, the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) can accept transfers of eligible rollover distributions from qualified retirement plans (or their designated financial institutions) or from conduit Individual retirement accounts (IRAs) that were set up to accept eligible rollover distributions. Traditional IRA and Roth IRAs are not eligible for transfer.

All TSP participants who have an open account can transfer money into the TSP. This includes participants who are separated from Federal service. However, a separated participant who is receiving monthly payments from his or her TSP account cannot transfer money into it.

The TSP-60 (Request for a Transfer Into the TSP) is the form to use and is available on the TSP web site at www.tsp.gov. Employees send this form directly to the TSP Service Office. Additional guidance is included in the form.

Rates of Return were updated on **July 5, 2001**.

	G Fund	F Fund	C Fund	S Fund	I Fund
June 2001	0.47%	0.39%	(2.42%)	0.66%	(3.99%)
<u>Last 12 Months</u> * (7/1/2000 - 6/30/2001)	5.86%	11.31%	(14.80%)	(13.59%)	(24.00%)

* The G, F, and C Fund returns for the last twelve months assume, except for the crediting of earnings, unchanging balances (time-weighting) from month to month and assume earnings are compounded on a monthly basis. The S and I Funds were implemented in May 2001, so the twelve-month returns reflect the performance of the S and I Funds for May 2001 and the related Barclay's funds in which they are invested for the previous 11 months. Percentages in () are negative.

UNISERV TSP

On Oct 9, 2001, UNISERV (military TSP) starts with a separate own Open Season. They will have their own summaries, forms, TSP bulletins, button on the web site, etc. There are only 2 times when the civilian TSP and the military TSP accounts meet: When the employee borrows money (consider both accounts) and deferral limits apply to both accounts combined.

The military will be able to put in 7% in Jan 2002. Military can put bonuses in TSP, however, if they have two accounts (like a reservist), they can't put the bonus in on the civilian side. A calculator will be put on the web to help reservists figure this out. Combat pay (non-taxable) does not count toward deferral limit.

Army and Air Military Personnel Offices have begun to disseminate information regarding the new program.

ELECTIVE DEFERRAL LIMITS ON THE RISE

Elective deferral limit will go up to \$11,000 and will be phased in up to \$15,000 each year in \$1,000 increments until it reaches \$15,000; after that it will be indexed. So it will go like this:

2002 - \$11,000, 2003 - \$12,000, 2004 - \$13,000, 2005 - \$14,000, 2006 - \$15,000.

?????“WHO’S GOT THE FACTS”????

Effective for the pay period ending June 16, 2001, the TSP record keeper, rather than DFAS, has the role of maintaining the official accounting of each participant's contribution allocation. DFAS Civilian Payroll will still deduct each participant's total biweekly TSP contribution and forward it to the TSP record keeper. The allocation among individual funds will be recorded by the record keeper.

With this change in responsibilities, DFAS Civilian Pay will no longer know to which of the individual fund(s) you have allocated your contributions. Therefore beginning with the Leave and Earnings Statement (LES) for the pay period ending June 16, 2001, Block 22 of the LES will be blank unless your TSP biweekly contribution is based on a percentage of basic pay. In that case the TSP deduction percentage will be displayed in Block 22 of your LES. The allocation information will be readily available under "Account Access" at the TSP website.

The result of the recent changes to TSP transfers maintaining the official accounting of each participant contribution allocation to the TSP record keeper from DFAS. DCPS new role is deducting each participating technician's total biweekly TSP contribution and forwards it to the TSP record keeper. The record keeper only records the allocation among individual funds.

With this change in responsibilities, DCPS will no longer reflect which individual fund(s) a technician allocated their contributions. This change eliminates the requirement for DCPS to maintain a TSP allocation table. DCPS will report each participant's TSP contributions lump sum amount rather than separate amounts allocated among the funds.

TSP ENHANCEMENT

Two new funds were added, bringing the total number of investment choices to five. Technicians also have "self-service" capabilities for interfund transfers or biweekly

contribution allocation. These actions are easily performed at any time either via the Internet at <http://www.tsp.gov> or via the TSP ThriftLine at 504-255-8777. The following features are available:

- a. Review your account balance as of the end of the previous month. (Account information and rates of return are generally available by the **4th business day of the month.**)
- b. Request, change, or cancel the allocation of future contributions.
- c. Request, changes, or cancels an interfund transfer.
- d. Review the loan amount available to you and the current loan interest rate.
- e. Review the status of your loan application.
- f. Review the status of your withdrawal payment.
- g. Replace or customize your four-digit TSP Personal Identification Number (PIN).

NOTE: The preferred method for Interfund Transfers (existing accounts) and Contribution Allocations (per pay period allocations) is the TSP web site or ThriftLine. Employees can also request a change to their contribution allocation or an interfund transfer by completing a TSP Form 50. The TSP Form 50 must be sent directly to the TSP record keeper.

You **cannot** enroll or increase your contributions in the TSP on the TSP Web site. This needs to be accomplished through the HRO office. For all Technician TSP questions, please contact SFC Sharon Kaberline/TSG Robert Gregori at (406) 841-3130/3131 or DSN 747-3130/3131. Air National Guard technicians may also contact MSG Lisa Smith at x2243.

SOCIAL SECURITY ANSWERS YOUR 576 MOST COMMON QUESTIONS

"I'll take 576 more questions, please." Not something you're likely to hear at a press conference, but you'll find it on our website. We get a lot of interesting queries, and we share them with you. If you have a question, check out "Frequently Asked Questions" on our website. From "How are my retirement benefits calculated?" to "How does a non-citizen obtain a Social Security number to get a driver's license?" we have the answers you want most. And if these 576 don't answer your question, by all means, let us know. There's always room for more! <http://www.ssa.gov/faqs/>.

New "71" Leave Request Form on Line

The SF71, Leave Request Form has been changed to OPM Form 71. A screen fillable version of the form is available at <http://www.opm.gov/forms/html/opm.htm>. This form should be used for all leave requests. It is the best way to document technician leave requests, especially to meet the requirements for Leave Carryover, when necessary, at the end of the year.

For all Technician Leave questions, please contact SSGT Sharon Kaberline/TSG Robert Gregori at (406) 841-3130/3131 or DSN 747-3130/3131. Air National Guard technicians may also contact MSG Lisa Smith at x2243.

"In the Zone" Retirement Seminar

FERS - 18 & 19 September 2001

CSRS - 19 & 20 September 2001

0800 - 1700

Location: 120th FW, Great Falls

Register by 29 August 2001

Priority given to those who expect to retire within 5 years

And have not been to a seminar within the last 3 years.

For more information and registration contact TSG Robert Gregori/SFC Sharon Kaberline (406) 841-3131/DSN 747-3131 MSG Lisa Smith (406) 791-6243/DSN 279-2243

SECTION VI – ACTIVE GUARD RESERVE

MSG GARY MORGAN

SGT TIMOTHY McCOY



TRICARE

Effective 15 August 2001 those of you with dependant enrolled in TriCare Standard will no longer have co-payments or deductibles. This will remain in effect until TriCare Prime Remote for families is established in the April 2002 time frame. This change does not affect your pharmacy benefits or dental benefits.

Beginning in August PGBA will be mailing refund checks to individuals who have made co-payments or deductibles since 31 Oct 00. This refund only applies if the dependant lived with the sponsor at the time of the medical service.

Once TriCare Prime Remote for families is implemented we will be holding town meetings across the state to review the program with the affected soldiers and their dependants. It is also recommended that you log on to www.mytricare.com and establish a personal login so that you can review claims and health care information.

ARMY AGR PERSONNEL/PAYROLL TRANSACTIONS

Although we placed this reminder in the last newsletter it has become painfully obvious that some of you do not believe us. This office will not be held accountable for payroll problems that were not processed accordingly.

This is your semi-annual reminder that all Army AGR personnel and payroll transactions must be routed through HRO. We have had several instances where documentation was sent directly to SIDPERS thinking that this would also change DFAS. Just so you know SIDPERS transactions do not drive AGR payroll changes.

NCOERs

Rumor has it that the AGR NCOER rating period was changed by this Headquarters to mirror the M-Day NCOER rating period. This is just a rumor, AGR soldiers rating

periods are covered in AR 623-205, if you do not know how this system works either read the regulation or ask your orderly room for assistance.

Transitional Assistance Program (TAP)

Many of you have received a telephone call, email or letter regarding TAP training. I want to briefly explain what this is all about. TAP is a 3.5-day training workshop offered at Malmstrom AFB in Great Falls. We are trying to get you to TAP training if you are within five (5) years of being eligible to retire. We will send you again within 6 months of your actual retirement once you submit your letter of intent to HRO-A. This workshop is an excellent opportunity to plan ahead. Some of the topics covered are: Transition Services, Career Assessment, Financial Planning, VA Benefits, Tricare and much more. Please consider attending this valuable workshop, it will help in more ways than one. Contact MSG Morgan, 841-3124 or SGT Thurston, 841-3116 for further information and to sign up!

FOR THE ADJUTANT GENERAL:

//signed//
JAMES D. HOGAN
COL, AR, MTARNG
Human Resources Officer

Distribution:
ARNG/ANG Intranet
HRO On-line
CoS Notes-ARNG E-mail
ANG E-mail